

**Members Present:** Peter Carlson, Chairman  
Donna Stock, Vice Chair  
Daryl Rynning, Secretary  
Teri Turgeon, Member  
Michael Urban, Member

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**Also Present:** Dr. James Cummings, Superintendent of Schools  
Tracey Calo, Assistant Superintendent  
Terry Tracy, Director of Finance

**Call to Order – Open Session**

- a. Comments from the public – None
- b. Student Presentation – Tim Fauth, Grafton Middle School Assistant Principle gave a presentation on three programs; Tutoring, Project 351 and the Saturday Academy. Starting with the tutoring/mentor program which pared middle school students with high school honor students. Participating students saw their aggregate scores improve in all subject areas. Twenty students currently participate in the program 3 days a week for one hour. On any given day, up to 10 students meet one on one with their tutor. Mr. Fauth reviewed specific data retrieved from the program, overall the average assessment scores of students increased. The National Honor Society students enjoy this program and enjoy giving back to the school system. Mrs. Turgeon thanked the students and parents involved and asked how parents and students were made aware of the program. Mr. Fauth said students had been recommended through staff to participate. The program is also discussed with parents during parent teacher conferences. Mrs. Rynning asked if the sessions were monitored by adults. Mr. Fauth said he was there as well as teachers in the library and others who drop in. Brian Brennan and Matt Olsen also step up when assistance is needed. Mr. Urban said the statistical information was a testament that this is a great program. He asked if there were any plans of growth. They are reviewing ideas such as Saturday program. As the year goes on, they will look to improve. Mr. Carlson noted that programs such as this was evidence that having the campus' side by side was a great idea. The next program discussed was the Saturday Academy now in its second year. The overall goal was to provide academic and social interventions to students in a safe and familiar environment. The program helps students finish projects, have access to resources and complete homework. A majority of the students are assigned to the academy for academic reasons though 17% attended on their own. The academy helps students deal with goal setting, and procrastination; it instills consistency and time management as well as help foster better work habits. The program is staffed by one member of the high school and middle school. Mrs. Turgeon asked if all the students met together. It was usually based on the size of the Saturday group. Mrs. Turgeon felt this was a great program and wanted students and parents to be aware it was open for academic reasons and

not for disciplinary measures only. It was good to see the resources available on weekends if students need it. The third program discussed was Project 351, developed in the first year of Deval Patrick's administration. It is a statewide youth driven service organization which unites 8<sup>th</sup> grade Ambassadors from every city and town in the Commonwealth. This year 10 Grafton students were nominated and after several rounds of vetting, Ms. Jessica Guertin was recommended as GMS's Project 351 Ambassador for the 2013-2014. Jessica and the other Ambassadors will have an opportunity in January to visit the State House in Boston, meet the Governor and begin working on their unique community project. Mr. Fauth and Chairman Carlson presented Ms. Guertin with a certificate of appreciation. The Committee suggested Jessica come back and tell the committee about her experience.

1. Educational Reports

- a. Update on Curriculum Committee Activities; Ms. Calo outlined the current activities of the curriculum committee and their work to date, moving toward common core studies. She outlined the process they were following and the timeline to date noting they were well on their way to meeting the timeline as outlined. Up and running were K through 12 ELA, Math, Social Studies, Science, Foreign Language and Technology. Ms. Calo thanked the facilitators of the committees. They meet with Ms. Calo regularly for support and handling decisions. Though ultimately, they are asked to make good educational choices. Ms. Calo gave an outline of the individual work each group had done to date. Their philosophy was reviewed; they are tight on goals loose on implementation in order to achieve the end projects. Everyone has the same goals, just a different process to get there. They will continue to meet and review the standards, review the curriculum look at common assessments. Mrs. Turgeon thanked Ms. Calo for the tremendous amount of work done to date across the board. Her ability to supervise and stay in the mix to put this structure in place was to be commended. In order for this program to be successful people need to be involved and own it, this has been shown. Mrs. Stock said parent communication was key and it should be incorporated into orientations. This should be a part of Dr. Cummings' monthly reports. Mrs. Stock thanked Ms. Calo for a great presentation.

2. General Business

- a. FY15 Preliminary Budget: Overview; Dr. Cummings gave a preliminary budget overview for the FY15 budget. Dr. Cummings will take tonight's feedback, fine tune the data and prepare a budget book. The first formal meeting with the Town Administrator was scheduled for tomorrow, Dec 17th. Over the past 5 meetings they reviewed individual line items and kept most on a needs based scenario. They have tried to tie it all back to district objectives and initiatives and keep a close eye on all the variables, including the fluctuating special education costs. Mr. Cummings stated that the return on investment was important and our results have been in the top 25% in terms of standardized testing. Noting with comparatively less we've done more. FY15 will be a tremendous challenge. In terms of actual funding, the set up of funding comes in from the town, chapter 70

money, entitlement grants and others fees. Town Funding is fairly fixed, as a benchmark, \$700,000 is a fairly safe number. Roughly what was needed is \$638,000 for staffing alone, which takes up a big portion of the budget. For a number of years it's been a challenge to maintain "status quo". Over the past decade, the town funding has been lowered, last year chapter 70 funds were revisited and increased. It could happen again, but not likely. Dr. Cummings reviewed the budget components, 85% of the overall budget was staff. Dr. Cummings reviewed individual sections of the budget, including staffing, buildings and grounds maintenance, HVAC Contracts, Textbook & Curriculum Materials, Technology, school choice and the Special Education pieces of the budget. He noted where potential savings and increases were anticipated for each. Without additional staffing, Dr. Cummings was looking at \$1,330,000. In terms of additional staffing, eight positions would be approximately \$400,000.00 +/-

In summary, Dr. Cummings hoped to have preliminary recommendations in January. He would be looking for direction in terms of parameters for recommendations. Dr. Cummings would like to use the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting to fine tune his recommendations and hold a budget hearing and vote on January 27<sup>th</sup>.

Mrs. Stock asked for clarification of the \$400,000. It was not reflected in the 1,330,000. Dr. Cummings confirmed this.

Mr. Carlson questioned the mandatory level of service component, was there additional information that would state we could use 12 new positions. Eight was based on what was absolutely mandatory to meet all special education needs. The impact will be reviewed in more detail, whether they get 12, 8 or if you can only have 4 positions. They will be defining the impact of this at the meeting on Thursday. Mrs. Turgeon had several questions relative to the special needs staffing piece; Dr. Cummings addressed her concerns. She was for advertising to fill the open seats as discussed last year. Mrs. Stock asked Dr Cummings to provide the anecdotal impact information, not just dollars amounts so the school committee had all the necessary information needed to advocate for these requests. Mrs. Turgeon wanted to be sure they could say they looked at every aspect, including fees to show they did their due diligence. Dr. Cummings answered several questions of the School Committee relative to his presentation of the budget.

Mr. Urban left the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

### 3. School Committee Member Reports

- a. Mrs. Stock stated the Secondary School Building Committee will meet tomorrow and she have an update at the next meeting.

4. Superintendent's Report

- a. District Update - Matt LeMaire, Physical Education Teacher at the Grafton Middle School, received a Place 60 Grant for \$2,000 which allowed a guest chef from Bushel N Peck to come and do a presentation on healthy eating. The Student Council sponsored Character Week. Speaker John Morrello was present to speak on character, integrity, respect and responsibility. Millbury Street School had a very success can drive. Winter sports were kicking off this week. The Mello Family organized a toy drive which for the Boston Children's Hospital in conjunction with the South Grafton Elementary School, it was very successful, the Boston Children's Hospital was very thankful.

5. Future Agenda Planning:

- a. Mr. Carlson noted a January 6<sup>th</sup> workshop, at 7:00 p.m., School Conf Room; Municipal Center to discuss the budget. He asked if they wished to discuss the Finance Committee summit as well. He had a recommendation to move the budget hearing from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup>. Therefore the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. and the 27<sup>th</sup> will start at 6:30 p.m.
  - b. Mrs. Turgeon would like to hold regular workshop and book them now. The third Monday of each month would be reserved for workshops through June, 7:00 p.m.
6. Approval of Minutes – November 25, 2013 A motion was made by Mrs. Stock to approve the November 25, 2013 minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Mrs. Rynning. Motion carried 4-0-1.
7. Policy: Sections G, H, K & L - Mrs. Stock asked for those to be passed as reviewed. Mr. Urban and Mrs. Stock asked for guidance on suggested changes to date. There was some formatting issues in the recent past. They wanted the conversion to happen and happen consistently. There should be one copy maintained in word and formatted the same. Ms. Boutiette was working on this project. Mrs. Turgeon asked if KB 1 and KB3 were being deleted. Mrs. Stock said yes because they encumbered procedures, so delete them and incorporate each into the district procedures. Approve the section of G Policies and one L Policy as reviewed. A motion was made by Mrs. Turgeon to approve GBEC, GBGA GBCA GCB, GCA, GCF, GDF GDF-R and LBC-1 as reviewed based on the recommendations of the policy committee. Motion seconded by Mrs. Rynning. Motion passed 4-0.

A motion was made by Mrs. Stock to adjourn at 9:25 p.m. Motion seconded by Mrs. Rynning. Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Cindy Ide  
Recording Secretary